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SUBJECT: MOZAMBIQUE -- CHILD LABOR INFORMATION

REF: A. 08 STATE 43120
[1](#)B. 08 STATE 127448
[1](#)C. 09 STATE 21472
[1](#)D. 09 STATE 92560
[1](#)E. 09 STATE 120277

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Approximately 75 per cent of Mozambicans work as subsistence farmers. Child labor is culturally tolerated and accepted as a source of employment especially in agriculture. Child labor in the urban context is largely related to domestic servitude. The Ministry of Labor (MITRAB) is responsible for carrying out labor inspections. MITRAB takes little initiative to prevent or combat child labor, however it collects statistical data in urban areas at the provincial and national level. The MITRAB has two main divisions which deal with child labor, the Labor Inspection Office (LIO) and the Office for Information and Statistics (OIS). Neither office publicly releases its budget; though the entire MITRAB budget was \$1.8 million in 2009. MITRAB believes that the use of child labor is extensive and often abusive, but does not conduct frequent outreach or maintain reliable data or documents. END SUMMARY.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF
EXPLOITIVE CHILD LABOR

[1](#)2. (SBU) The most recent available survey, Child Labor In Mozambique, August-December 2007, published by MITRAB, does not specify the number of children who work in servitude as domestic laborers. These minors, recruited mainly in poverty-stricken rural areas, are promised food, clothing and schooling in the city, in exchange for performing domestic work. MITRAB concedes that it is difficult to monitor such cases. Those employing a child domestic worker often falsely declare the child as a family member and often the child is not aware that he is being exploited. Exploitive child labor is common in agricultural rural areas. According to Francisco Mazoio of Mozambique's largest union, the OTM-Central Syndicate, parents who had been hired to work on cotton, coconut and cashew plantations in northern Mozambique (Zambezia, Nampula and Cabo Delgado provinces) often used their own children in order to increase their income. These children worked long hours, were prevented from attending school and received no pay.

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

[1](#)3. (SBU) In the Mozambican legal system, laws approved by the legislature require implementing regulations before they can be enforced. Implementing regulations have yet to be drafted for the 2008 Child Protection Act. The Act calls for

the creation of a national commission to protect children (currently the responsibility of the Ministry of Women and Social Action, which has other competing interests). UNICEF,s Maputo office expressed concern that the implementing regulations for the Act are not in place yet. Anti-trafficking legislation is also pending draft regulations, although Mozambique was one of the first countries in southern Africa to pass an anti-trafficking law in 2008.

INSTITUTIONS AND MECHANISMS FOR ENFORCEMENT

14. (SBU) According to two OIS employees, MITRAB works alone and without support in its efforts to enforce child labor laws. There are no mechanisms in place for making complaints about hazardous and forced child labor. The LIO confirms that it lacks adequate funding. In fact, its officials are not aware of just how much funding, if any, is allocated for inspection purposes. The LIO lacks the most basic of resources, such as vehicles. Its inspectors often have to rely on the very company committing violations to provide travel to the site of a violation. Mozambique has a total of 130 labor inspectors but they are underpaid, making them vulnerable to bribes. Poor training is also a factor contributing to inadequate supervision and enforcement. For example, MITRAB failed to obtain any data at all for four of the eleven provinces in Mozambique in a recent report.

15. (SBU) MITRAB's inspectors are not trained, funded, or equipped to monitor child labor issues in a large country

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twice the size of California, in which over 80 percent of the population lives in rural areas. MITRAB is also more motivated to inspect commercial establishments, as the Ministry takes a percentage of any fines assessed. MITRAB officials inspected five thousand businesses in 2008 and 8,155 infractions were detected; however data for 2009 is not yet available. It has no detailed information distinguishing complaint-driven from government-initiated inspections. There is also no information available as to how many of these cases were related to child labor or exploitive labor. MITRAB officials stated that only about 30% of the 8,155 infractions were penalized because MITRAB prefers to educate first and punish later. (NOTE: Post suspects that the extremely low number of fines is due to corruption. END NOTE) There are no statistics tracking convictions and MITRAB could not provide specifics as to the average time required to resolve a child labor case, indicating several months as a minimum.

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR
EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT

16. (SBU) Domestic trafficking is a component of child labor in some cases. Mozambique created an anti-trafficking brigade (ATB) in 2008 that works under the Ministry of the Interior and is responsible for investigating and prosecuting trafficking in persons (TIP) cases. No arrests have been made, despite many suspected TIP cases having been reported in the media. Police note that TIP is a complex transaction involving several individuals; often the key trafficker is not known to those who work for him. A police official who works on cases of abuse against women and children, including TIP cases, declined to provide ATB personnel or funding particulars. In 2009 Mozambique launched a dedicated hotline for reporting TIP-related cases. According to Rede-Came, an NGO that works to prevent child abuse, between November and December of last year, about 1,900 complaints were received. Unfortunately, no investigations were opened.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

¶7. (SBU) The Government of Mozambique (GRM) does not have a formal plan or policy that specifically addresses child labor. The Ministry of Women and Social Action (MIMAS) is charged with overall responsibility for the welfare of children. MIMAS chairs an inter-ministerial group on social issues which includes representatives from the Ministry of Education, Health, Justice, Labor and Interior. UNICEF believes that the January 2010 appointment of a new MIMAS Minister, Iolanda Cintura, may spur greater activity.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

¶8. (SBU) The GRM does not indentify exploitive child labor as an issue in its whole-of-government poverty reduction plans. It does, however, establish targets for access to education for children as part of its five-year plan. Access-to-education programs include free distribution of school materials and food, designed to encourage school attendance by vulnerable children. MIMAS receives less than one percent of the total government budget and relies on UNICEF for such basic necessities as office supplies and equipment, as well as technical support. The Interior Ministry,s Office for Assistance to Women and Children Victims of Violence relies on police units based throughout the country. Because these officers lack training, unprofessional handling of sensitive cases may discourage victims from seeking help.

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